

City of Tempe Veterans' Court Participant Handbook

Tempe Municipal Court

City of Tempe Prosecutor's Office

City of Tempe Public Defender's Office





Welcome to the City of Tempe Veterans Court. This handbook will provide you with a description of what is expected of you as a Veterans' Court participant. Participants are encouraged to share this handbook with family and friends. Three simple rules will ensure success:

1. Show up

2. Try hard

3. Be honest

VETERANS' COURT DESCRIPTION

The City of Tempe Veterans' Court is a voluntary program that includes regular court appearances before the Judge. Treatment may include weekly individual and group counseling, drug and alcohol testing, mental health treatment, medical treatment and regular attendance at recovery support/self-help meetings. You may be provided with referrals for vocational training, education and/or job placement services. The program's length is dependent upon an intake assessment completed by the VA or other provider. Ongoing aftercare services may be available to all graduates.

Entry into the Veterans' Court is voluntary and will require that you enter a plea agreement or treatment plan—this Court does not conduct criminal trials. Supervision may include random drug and alcohol testing and follow up by the Veterans' Justice Outreach Coordinator and Veterans' Court Team. Your defense counsel will continue to represent you throughout your participation in the Veterans' Treatment Court.

Prior to entering a plea agreement, you may choose to withdraw from Veterans' Court request prosecution of your case through the regular court process. There may be

instances where an eligibility or suitability issue may arise which may disqualify you. Successful completion and graduation from the program may result in a dismissal of the charges in certain cases or a reduction in sentence. Failure to complete the required treatment or removal from the program will result in your case being processed through the regular court process. If you have entered a plea agreement, the sentence contained in that agreement will be imposed.

SUPERVISION

You will be required to appear in court for progress reviews. The Veterans' Court Team will be given a progress report prepared by the VA case manager, with input from other agencies, regarding your performance in the program. If you are doing well you will be encouraged to continue with the program, and to work with your treatment team toward success.

If you are not doing well the Judge will discuss this with you and your treatment team, and further action will be determined. Repeated violations or the failure to progress satisfactorily may be subject to removal from the program and your cases will be handled on a regular court docket or your sentence will be imposed.

PROGRAM RULES

- 1. Attend all ordered treatment sessions.**

This includes individual and group counseling, educational sessions, doctor appointments, recovery support/self-help meetings and any other treatment requirements.

2. Follow all court orders and release conditions.

You must comply with all conditions of release as directed by the Court. You must also notify the Court of any change in residence or phone number. If you are unable to report as directed, contact your defense attorney or the Public Defender's Office immediately.

3. Submit to drug and alcohol testing.

Sobriety is a primary focus of this program. Maintaining a lifestyle free of drugs and alcohol is very important in your recovery process. Do not use or possess any drugs or alcohol. You must be prepared to provide a urine sample at any time. **If you fail to provide a monitored urine sample, this will be considered a positive drug test.**

You must notify your treatment team of any prescription or over-the-counter medication or supplements prior to taking them, unless it is a medical emergency.

4. Be on time to all appointments including court appearances.

If you are late for a counseling session or testing, you may not be allowed to participate or test and will be considered non-compliant.

PROGRAM FEES



Non-VA treatment providers and/or residential treatment programs may impose their own fees on a sliding scale. If you are not eligible for VA benefits or elect to use an approved private provider, you are expected to cover these costs.

TREATMENT PROCEDURES

The treatment team will assess what level of treatment will best meet your needs. They will recommend either outpatient or residential treatment to the Judge. If you are admitted to a residential treatment program, your treatment plan will include the requirements of that program. Upon release from a residential program you will continue your participation in the program, as directed by the Veterans' Court Team. If you are not admitted into a residential treatment program, you will participate in a multi-component outpatient program developed through the VA or other approved community based programs. This may include developing a treatment plan, drug testing, counseling, recovery support services and recovery support/self-help meetings.

Drug Testing

You may be tested for drug and alcohol use at random times throughout the entire treatment process. The Veterans' Court Team will have access to all drug test results, including any failures to test, and may order a drug test at any time. Relapse may occur in recovery; however, a positive diluted or missed test may result in a court-imposed sanction. Tampering with any drug test will be deemed a positive test. The Veterans' Court Team will review your overall performance in the program. Repeated offenses may result in progressively severe sanctions. These sanctions may include a reprimand from the Judge, additional community service hours, homework assignments, jail or removal from Veterans' Court.

Counseling

Counseling can be either individual and/or group. As part of your treatment plan you may be required to participate in both types of counseling. You may be required to attend additional treatment such as Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) groups, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) treatment, anger management, parenting classes or any other topic the treatment team recognizes as needed. Your attendance at both individual and group counseling sessions will be reported to the team as part of your progress report. You must have prior permission to be excused from any counseling sessions.

Recovery Support/Self-Help Meetings

You may be required to attend recovery support/self-help meetings. The frequency of required attendance is determined by your progress in the program and your phase level. Attendance is an important part of the recovery process. The meetings will familiarize you with the recovery support/self-help philosophy and help you to create social bonds with other people in recovery. Your treatment team will provide you with information regarding the time and location of these meetings and will also direct you to special interest and recovery events in your community.

TREATMENT

Veterans' Court is a therapeutic treatment court. Each veteran will participate in a specified treatment plan based on an assessment completed by the VA or other health care specialists. Individual treatment plans and progress will vary but may include counseling for up to six to 12 months or longer if necessary. If you decide not to participate in the treatment plan, then your case will be transferred out of Veterans' Court into a regular

court setting. You are subject to all Veterans' Court and VA supervision during treatment. If the rules are violated, you may be subject to sanctions.

Treatment Plan Development

The City of Tempe Veterans' Court has a Veterans' Justice Outreach Coordinator (VJO) who monitors your progress. Your needs will be assessed by the treatment team. Your progress will be closely monitored and reported to the Judge. Requirements include:

- Participate in full assessment in order to determine treatment needs. Course of treatment is individualized according to participant needs.
- Participate in all forms of treatment as directed by the treatment team.
- Comply with additional case management services as determined by the treatment team.
- Drug and alcohol testing as directed.
- Take medication as directed by medical and mental health professionals.
- Attend ordered recovery support/self-help meetings.
- Report to the VJO as ordered.
- Participate in clean & sober recreation.
- Attend court appearances as determined by the Veterans Court Team.

<p>CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS IN THE PROGRAM</p>

- Participate in all forms of treatment as directed by the treatment team.
- Attend other treatment services as determined to be necessary by the treatment team.

- No positive drug test results (including missed, tampered or diluted tests).
- No unexcused absences from scheduled services.
- Medication taken as directed.
- Employment or productive use of time such as community service or school attendance.
- Documentation of required minimum attendance at recovery support/self-help meetings.
- Demonstrate a positive adjustment to treatment.
- Have a clear understanding of recovery support/self-help concepts.
- A definitive aftercare plan may include recovery support/self-help meetings, VA outpatient counseling group attendance at a former residential program.
- Fulfillment of goals as stated in the individual treatment plan.

SANCTIONS

If you do not comply with your program, the Veterans' Court Judge **may** impose one or more of the following:

- Admonishment from the Judge
- Write an essay and read it aloud
- Increased drug testing
- Increased frequency of court appearances
- Community Service
- Lengthen time in program
- Jail Time
- Removal from Veterans Court



SOCIAL SERVICES

Upon your entry into the Veterans' Court, your treatment team will assess your housing, transportation, employment, family situation and general living needs. When appropriate the team will refer you to local, state and/or county agencies for additional assistance.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your identity and privacy will be protected consistent with Federal Regulations (e.g., 42CFR, Part 2; 45CFR, Parts 160 and 164). You will be asked to sign a release of information authorizing the transfer of information among all participating agencies.

GRADUATION



The Veterans' Court Team will determine the candidate's qualification for graduation. Successful completion and graduation from the program may result in a dismissal of the charges in certain cases or a reduction in sentence.

CONCLUSION

The Veterans' Court program is designed to help you live in our community as a productive and responsible citizen. The Judge, court staff and the Treatment Team will guide and assist you, however the responsibility is yours. You must be committed to a better life. Remember the three basic rules:

1. Show up

2. Try hard

3. Be honest